

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A bottom pad assembly for sealing a bottom opening formed when a vehicle is parked adjacent to a loading dock comprising:

a first mounting bracket adapted to be positioned adjacent to a first end of a dock opening;

a second mounting bracket adapted to be positioned adjacent to second end of a dock opening, the second end being displaced a predetermined distance relative to the first end;

a bottom pad extending between the first mounting bracket and the second mounting bracket for engaging a rear portion of a vehicle parked adjacent to a loading dock; and

a leveler for facilitating the loading and unloading of a vehicle when a vehicle is parked adjacent to a loading dock, said leveler including a ramp portion and a leveler lip pivotally mounted relative to the ramp portion on a distal end thereof for extending into a vehicle; and

a clearance space formed between the bottom pad and a loading dock, said clearance space is adapted to selectively receive ~~a portion of a~~ the leveler lip of the leveler when the leveler lip is pivoted downwardly to be positioned within the clearance space for facilitating the loading and unloading of a vehicle when the vehicle is full and the leveler lip is not able to be lowered into the vehicle.

2. (Original) The bottom pad assembly according to claim 1, wherein said first mounting bracket includes a first flange adapted to be mounted on a loading dock and said second mounting bracket includes a second flange adapted to be mounted on a loading dock, said bottom pad extending between said first mounting bracket and said second mounting bracket.

3. (Original) The bottom pad assembly according to claim 1, and further including a first bumper mounted adjacent to said first mounting bracket and a second bumper mounted adjacent to said second mounting bracket, said bottom pad extending outwardly from said

first and second bumpers for providing a resilient engagement with a vehicle parked adjacent to a loading dock for sealing a space disposed therebetween.

4. (Original) The bottom pad assembly according to claim 1, and further including a bottom draft plug movably positioned within said clearance space for normally sealing a lower portion of said clearance space and for selectively being displaced from said lower portion for removing debris disposed within said clearance space.

5. (Cancelled)

6. (Original) The bottom pad assembly according to claim 1, wherein said bottom pad is vertically adjustable relative to said first mounting bracket and said second mounting bracket.

7. (Original) The bottom pad assembly according to claim 6, and further including a bottom pad pan for supporting said bottom pad, said bottom pad pan extending between said first mounting bracket and said second mounting bracket and being mounted relative thereto for selective vertical movement for manually positioning said bottom pad at a proper elevation relative to a vehicle parked at a loading dock.

8. (Original) The bottom pad assembly according to claim 7, wherein said bottom pad pan includes a top angle and a bottom angle, said top angle is mounted relative to an upper portion of said bottom pad and said bottom angle is mounted relative to a lower portion of said bottom pad.

9. (Original) The bottom pad assembly according to claim 7, and further including a first flange member secured to a first end of said bottom pad pan and a second flange member secured to a second end of said bottom pad pan, said first flange member being

adapted to be mounted relative to said first mounting bracket and said second flange member being adapted to be mounted relative to said second mounting bracket.

10. (Original) The bottom pad assembly according to claim 4, and further including a first elastic cord member secured to a first end of said bottom draft plug and a second elastic cord member secured to a second end of said bottom draft plug for selectively raising said bottom draft plug into said lower position for reducing air infiltration within said clearance space.

11. (Currently Amended) A bottom pad assembly for sealing a bottom opening formed when a vehicle is parked adjacent to a loading dock comprising:

a bottom pad adapted to be positioned to span an opening in a loading dock, said bottom pad disposed relative to a floor surface of a loading dock for engaging a rear portion of a vehicle parked adjacent to a loading dock; and

a leveler for facilitating the loading and unloading of a vehicle when a vehicle is parked adjacent to a loading dock, said leveler including a ramp portion and a leveler lip pivotally mounted relative to the ramp portion on a distal end thereof for extending into a vehicle; and

a clearance space formed between the bottom pad and a loading dock, said clearance space is adapted to selectively receive ~~a portion of a~~ the leveler lip of the leveler when the leveler lip is pivoted downwardly to be positioned within the clearance space for facilitating the loading and unloading of a vehicle when the vehicle is full and the leveler lip is not able to be lowered into the vehicle.

12. (Original) The bottom pad assembly according to claim 11, and further including a first mounting bracket having a first flange adapted to be mounted on a loading dock and a second mounting bracket having a second flange adapted to be mounted on a loading dock,

said bottom pad extending between said first mounting bracket and said second mounting bracket.

13. (Original) The bottom pad assembly according to claim 12, and further including a first bumper mounted adjacent to said first mounting bracket and a second bumper mounted adjacent to said second mounting bracket, said bottom pad extending outwardly from said first and second bumpers for providing a resilient engagement with a vehicle parked adjacent to a loading dock for sealing a space disposed therebetween.

14. (Original) The bottom pad assembly according to claim 11, and further including a bottom draft plug movably positioned within said clearance space for normally sealing a lower portion of said clearance space and for selectively being displaced from said lower portion for removing debris disposed within said clearance space.

15. (Cancelled)

16. (Original) The bottom pad assembly according to claim 12, wherein said bottom pad is vertically adjustable relative to said first mounting bracket and said second mounting bracket.

17. (Original) The bottom pad assembly according to claim 16, and further including a bottom pad pan for supporting said bottom pad, said bottom pad pan extending between said first mounting bracket and said second mounting bracket and being mounted relative thereto for selective vertical movement for manually positioning said bottom pad at a proper elevation relative to a vehicle parked at a loading dock.

18. (Original) The bottom pad assembly according to claim 17, wherein said bottom pad pan includes a top angle and a bottom angle, said top angle is mounted relative to an

upper portion of said bottom pad and said bottom angle is mounted relative to a lower portion of said bottom pad.

19. (Original) The bottom pad assembly according to claim 17, and further including a first flange member secured to a first end of said bottom pad pan and a second flange member secured to a second end of said bottom pad pan, said first flange member being adapted to be mounted relative to said first mounting bracket and said second flange member being adapted to be mounted relative to said second mounting bracket.

20. (Original) The bottom pad assembly according to claim 14, and further including a first elastic cord member secured to a first end of said bottom draft plug and a second elastic cord member secured to a second end of said bottom draft plug for selectively raising said bottom draft plug into said lower position for reducing air infiltration within said clearance space.

21. (Original) The bottom pad assembly according to claim 14, wherein said bottom draft plug may be selectively pushed down out of said clearance space by at least one of a lower leveler lip and a manual tool to allow debris disposed within said clearance space to drop out.